

# Info-Bits

Winter  
2010

I·B

A Publication for the Employees of the City of Torrance

## Our Annual PEOPLE Issue



We may be biased but we think the employees at the City of Torrance are an outstanding bunch. City employees maintain positive attitudes and continue to get the job done using creativity, resourcefulness, perseverance, teamwork and, dare we say it, a sense of humor. Info-Bits went out and asked a few employees to look back at 2010 and to share their experience. Here are just a few of their thoughts.

We deal with a lot of different kinds of jobs for lots of events and special projects; everything is on a deadline, high pressure and can get complicated with changes. I just love making it all happen, I look at the challenges as a way to expand my mind and find ways to make the best of it. I have always been a happy person and I always try to share my smile with my co-workers. Sometimes they look at me like they think I am crazy but things always work out. I always come in to work whistling and looking forward to another day working in a job I love.

**Erick Hernandez**  
*Reprographic Operator*  
*General Services*



**Lauren Sablan & Emmanuel Martin**  
*Associate Engineers*  
*Public Works*

2010 saw the beginning of projects that will continue this year in phases. We are down four engineers in our division but we are managing by working together and working hard. Each engineer has at least two projects at any given time. When we get into the project design and construction we rely on the key people from all divisions and we collaborate when someone needs help. We will meet in the field, tap into each other's expertise, and contact whoever is most knowledgeable or has the most information.

Lauren was the project engineer for the realignment of the sewer and water lines on phase one of the Del Amo Boulevard Extension project to relocate utilities. Phase two, construction of the road and bridge, begins in 2011 under the supervision of engineering managers, Beth

Overstreet and Craig Bilezerian. Lauren is also the project engineer for the design of the continuing rehabilitation of Torrance Boulevard from Sartori to Western this year. Construction for Torrance Boulevard Street Rehabilitation project will begin in 2011 as well.

Emmanuel, under the supervision of John Dettle, was responsible for the completion of the T-1 water vault rehabilitation that required piping and valve replacement and an upgraded computer control system. He also has been working on the Downtown Torrance Sewer Project, Phase 1, where existing clay pipes were relined with pvc piping and repairs to broken sewer pipes were made. Phase one was completed in August 2010. There will be a landscape project and water main replacement on Western Avenue in 2011 as well as phase two of the Downtown Sewer Project.

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# A Benefits Story

## How city employees can best utilize their benefits. "Leave and Disability Benefits"

Johnny X was hired by the City on January 5, 2002. Included in his benefits package is a \$50,000 group life insurance policy and short term and long term disability that the City provides at no cost to the employee.

Johnny went water skiing over a holiday weekend and injured his leg. Johnny was to return to work after the holiday, but couldn't due to his injury. Johnny called his supervisor and notified him of his injury. Johnny's doctor advised him that the injury required surgery and Johnny would be off work for approximately 3 months. His supervisor advised Johnny to apply for medical leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and California Family Rights Act (CFRA) and to apply for short term disability with the insurance carrier, Standard. The FMLA and CFRA cover 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12 month period as long as Johnny worked a minimum of 1250 hours in the preceding 12 months. He was able to find all the necessary forms on the City's website or on the TEN.

Johnny completed all the necessary paperwork and elected to use his sick and vacation leave to cover his 14 day waiting period. He also elected to supplement his disability

pay. Standard Insurance will pay 2/3 of his disability payment. The supplemental pay offered by the City will cover 1/3 of his payment by using his accrued sick, vacation and compensatory leave. The combined benefits will bring him up to 100% of his pay.

Fortunately, Johnny had a full recovery and returned to work with no restrictions. He was able to use the City leave benefits to recover from his injury and maintain his benefits while he was on leave from his job at the City. **I-B**

## New Employee Orientation – Refreshed, Renewed and Reinvigorated

Many employees experienced the benefits of the recently revamped CORE training this past year and now, New Employee Orientation is being revitalized. "We thought that the program should include an introduction to CORE training to provide our new employees with a springboard to success," said Ellie Barthe-Jones, one of the program designers. "We want them to understand what is expected of all city employees, and what they can expect in return" she continued. "We give them a foundation of information that helps them to feel like a part of the team immediately."

Subtle changes to the existing program emphasize how to better serve Torrance citizens and businesses as well as other city employees with an emphasis on the Strategic Plan, its vision, mission and values. The six hour seminar covers a wide range of topics and presenters beginning with the City Manager's presentation, "What it Means to be a City Employee" and a synopsis of the city's history and government. The curriculum utilizes videos and interactive group exercises to address ethics, city policies, emergency preparedness, and benefits. "At the end of the day, the new employee will know they have made a great decision to join us and, if they have questions, they will know where to look for answers," said Barthe-Jones. The revitalized Employee Orientation will be rolled out in early 2011. **I-B**

### New Employees

10/10 - 12/10

#### Fire

Laura M. Bednar  
Fire Prevention Specialist

#### Police

Charles Ahn  
Anthony R. Chavez  
Wayne A. Holbrook  
Stephen I. Kim  
Andrew J. Lee  
Police Officer

#### Police continued

Nicholas P. Rea  
Steven A. Ruiz  
Matthew A. Slawson  
Police Officer

#### Transit

Tonny W. Lindsey  
Tony L. Prince  
Bus Operator

### Retirees

10/10 - 12/10

Name	Title	Ret Date	Years of Svc.
Otoniel Asencio	Bus Operator	10/9/10	20
Marsha Barnett	Police Officer	12/29/10	30
Abe Catabay	Identification Analyst	12/28/10	24
Lucretia Clayton	Secretary	12/28/10	4.8
Timothy Cummings	Fire Fighter	12/18/10	30
Elizabeth Dotsch	Bus Operator	11/30/10	17
Robert Frazier	Lead Maintenance Worker	12/20/10	24
Joseph Gaines	Police Sergeant	12/30/10	16
Robin Glenn	Public Safety Dispatcher	10/23/10	31
Fred Heslep	Police Officer	11/16/10	29
Michael Jenkins	Fire Fighter	12/17/10	30
Julio Jimenez	Custodian	11/30/10	17
Dennis Kobata	Administrative Analyst	12/30/10	10
Dana Lukas	Public Safety Dispatcher	12/29/10	35
Dean Martin	Senior Building Inspector	12/2/10	26
Brenda Mohr	Library Assistant	12/10/10	29
John Nash	Fire Captain	10/21/10	30
Janice Niida	Typist Clerk	9/29/10	20
Carlos Ornelas	Police Officer	12/18/10	28
Donna Rizzo	Workers Comp Administrator	12/16/10	27
Geoffrey Rizzo	Police Lieutenant	12/16/10	29
Minda Sandberg	Accountant	11/18/10	22
James Sheldon	Building Inspector Supervisor	12/9/10	28
Patrick Shortall	Police Lieutenant	12/21/10	26
David Smith	Police Captain	12/20/10	30
Rodger Smith	Facilities Service Supervisor	12/6/10	27
Timothy Stark	Police Officer	12/2/10	21
Edward Webb	Police Officer	12/18/10	29
Paula Weiner	City Librarian	12/30/10	24

### Promotions

10/10 - 12/10

#### Community Development

Rita Cholakian  
Carol D. Schroeder  
Permit Technician I

#### Fleet Services

Miguel A. Garcia  
Dale K. Jones  
Fleet Services Supervisor

#### Police Department

Donna S. Brandelli  
Forensic Supervisor  
Micah S. Borrett  
Public Safety Dispatcher  
Carrie M. Harris  
Forensic ID Specialist

#### Police Department continued

Martin V. Vukotic  
Lieutenant  
Patrick J. Hunt  
Sergeant

#### Public Works

Christopher M. Lehr  
Water Service Tech I

#### Transit

Roberto M. Ramirez  
Bus Operator



## eNotify

### Retirees - You can "Subscribe" to Info-Bits online!

An electronic service, eNotify allows anyone to receive updates on certain web pages. You can subscribe to Info-Bits and other city information updates by registering online at <http://www.torranceca.gov/20726.htm>. Once you have registered, you can choose from a menu of update notifications for various city web pages, including Info-Bits. Check the boxes to choose the information you would like to monitor and you will be emailed when the web pages are updated.

Here is the process to sign up:

- Log In
- Click e-notify
- Click webpage subscription
- Under Human Resources is Retiree Resources
- Check Retiree Resources box
- Click save on bottom of page
- A message on top of page will say "Database updated successfully"
- Exit or log out

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## Retirement

Did you know that. . .

The City of Torrance employees who pay into Social Security are NOT subject to the Social Security reduction at the time of retirement?

The Social Security reduction provision applies if an individual participates in Social Security and a government pension such as CalPERS. In that case, retirement contributions are not paid on the first \$133.33 of monthly earnings therefore, impacting the calculation of Social Security benefits at retirement.

How does this apply to the City of Torrance employees covered by both retirement systems?

The City of Torrance retirement plan under CalPERS is not coordinated with Social Security; therefore, when you become eligible for Social Security your retirement benefit will be calculated without the adjustment or Social Security reduction. For further information on this subject, please visit Social Security Administration website at: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) or the CalPERS website at: [www.calpers.ca.gov](http://www.calpers.ca.gov).

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## Holiday Giving

City employees adopted 325 needy children through the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program. Presents were piled high under the trees. Thanks to everyone who helped brighten the holidays for the kids.

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City Manager's Office, Finance, Public Works, Police Department (Not shown, Library)



## Moments in Torrance History

By Michael George, Torrance Librarian

Much like the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) enacted during the "Great Recession" of 2009, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), enacted during the Great Depression of the 1930's, provided jobs through building waterworks, paving roads, building infrastructure and producing works of public art. In 1936 the new Torrance City Hall, Civic Auditorium and Library were built with the aid of the WPA, thereby changing the face of Downtown



Torrance and the city. Today, the former City Hall is occupied by Time Warner

Cable at Cravens and El Prado, the Library is now the Torrance Historical Society at 1345 Post Avenue and the Civic Auditorium, built on El Prado Avenue was razed in the early 1970's.



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# Robert W. Goldsworthy Desalter Project

The Robert W. Goldsworthy Desalter was constructed by the Water Replenishment District (WRD) of Southern California in 2002 as a means to remove brackish groundwater from a saline plume trapped beneath the Torrance area. The increased use of local groundwater due to the population explosion here in the first half of the last century caused groundwater levels to sink low enough to allow ocean water to migrate inland, a problem that is being addressed today.

While efforts to control this movement are ongoing, a 400 foot well pumps the salty water into a very, high tech reverse osmosis plant, located in the City Yard. The plant extracts and treats 2.5 million gallons per day and supplies 10% of Torrance's potable water.

The WRD operated the desalting operation until this past January when they handed the operations over to our Water Department. John Aguiar was tapped to supervise day to day operations with the help of Brian McNamara and Jeff Adams. "The entire system is computer controlled through Human Machine Interface (HMI), better known as Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) software," said Aguiar. Sensors monitor water quality and pressure and control the level of chemicals dispensed throughout the process. "We have people monitoring at the facility about 70% of the time. If there is a condition that requires a response when no one is in the control room, the computer calls me on my cell!" says Aguiar. Usually, by the time he gets his shoes on to travel to the plant, the computer has corrected the problem.

Named for a former WRD director, the Desalter site has room for expansion that would double the amount of water that could be processed. The project is 100% financed by the Clean Water Fund and helps to limit the need for imported water.



*The pump at the wellhead.*



*Treatment tanks*



*Water is finally forced through these filters; the cutaway shows the interior of the filter tubes.*



*John Aguiar explains that the controls are protected by a clear acrylic shield.*



*Brian McNamara monitors the system through the HMI.*

# Our Annual



## Issue

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**Rich Hall**  
*Traffic and Lighting Supvr.  
Public Works*

discovered that 25% of the lamps were out at Wilson Park. We decided to "re-lamp" the entire park to save staff time in the future. We are happy that we have not had any jobs cut or been asked to do furloughs.



**Debbie Collins**  
*Cultural Services Secretary  
Community Services*

One of my favorite duties is facilitating the Excellence in Arts Awards. Every year I get to plan the event in conjunction with the Cultural Arts Commission. Nearly 300 people attended the 33rd awards program last year. Many of the recipients perform live or we show video clips of their performances. Recently, we moved the event to October which has been designated National Arts and Humanities month. My job is demanding, interesting and rewarding; I am reminded of the rewards every time I see the little ballerinas in dance class.

We are responsible to log in maintenance of all traffic signals on a monthly basis to ensure public safety and protect the city from liability. We have managed to keep the logs up to date throughout the year despite understaffing through teamwork and temporarily bringing back retirees. Everybody is pulling together to do all the jobs, I put on a uniform and work in the field when we are short staffed. Recently we became responsible for park lighting and

My division has a small staff with a wide range of duties. We oversee all of the cultural programs and classes at the Cultural Arts Center and the events and exhibitions at the Torrance Art Museum. The Torrance Theater Company keeps us busy as well with four top rate productions a year. I enjoy working with people who are passionate about the arts and I really appreciate the support we get from the community for all of our programs.

We focus on supporting city departments in their quest to serve citizens. As requests come in for new systems, we try to find solutions that can support more than one department. The Geographic Information System (GIS) is a program that we are finding many applications for within the city. The system is capable of providing all kinds of information to city departments and, soon, citizens as well. In addition to conventional items you'd expect to find on a map, the system shows the locations of manholes, fire hydrants and other utilities.

In October, 2010, we rolled out a crime mapping application that automatically reflects the locations of crimes relayed from the Police Department's Records Management System. The public has access to this information via the police website (<http://www.torranceca.gov/TPD/8992.htm>) for 45 days, after a 4 day delay for investigation. The automation saves about 50% of the department's data entry needs and increases transparency to the public.

We are testing another application of the GIS that will enable the public to do property research online to discover permit history, locations of utilities and much more. We look for efficient solutions that can sometimes mean recommending a special program, like one for tracking Dig Alert marking requests. But we try to avoid specialized, costly applications. An example of this is that rather than supporting many applications to provide GIS information to mobile devices, we are working to extend our existing GIS software. This should keep our costs lower and make the system easier to maintain, while improving the service we provide. These applications will save a lot of staff time in the near future. It's exciting to discover multiple uses for the GIS system and other software, and worth all the time it takes to research and learn new technologies.



**Stephen Lavey**  
*Systems Analyst  
Information Technology*

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## Torrance TRIVIA

Last issue's question: *What former Mayor of Torrance was elected to the fourth supervisory district of "South Bay County"?*

Answer: Ken Miller. The proposed South Bay County was to include the beach cities (Redondo, Manhattan, Hermosa and El Segundo) and PVE with Torrance as the county seat. In 1978 the proposed county, along with a proposed Peninsula County, failed. However, in order to be ready to go if the proposition passed, election was held for county offices.

Only two people answered this one correctly, **Jeannie Fuller** and **Jay Spradlin!**

**New Question: During the height of the Depression, Torrance saw it's only "socialist" mayor. Who was this short termed chief executive?**

*Thanks to Torrance Librarian, Michael George for these trivia questions and answers.*

Submit your answers to:  
**JanetStancliff3@gmail.com** and put Trivia in the subject line.

**I•B**

## Guess Who???

Our  
Mystery  
Subject in  
the Fall  
2010  
issue of  
Info-Bits –  
Tony  
Mullikan!



(photo at right)

Correct Responders were:  
**Liz Shiroma, Steve Ebersole, Donna Baranowski, Bill Kamimura, Pat Roderick, Malisa Broesamie, and Carol Kay.**

The winner of the drawing is: **Pat Roderick!** Contact Myisha Phillips in Human Resources for your prize.

Guess Who?? will return with a new Mystery Subject next issue.

**I•B**

## CALENDAR

**Sunday, April 10th,  
9am - 4 pm – Wilson Park,  
2200 Crenshaw Blvd,  
Torrance Ca**

The Spring Boutique will include one-of-a-kind handcrafted goods made by Torrance area artist and crafters. This event is free to the public. For more information please visit us at [www.Recreation.TorranceCA.Gov](http://www.Recreation.TorranceCA.Gov) or contact the City of Torrance Community Services Department at (310) 618-2930.

**I•B**

Submit all game responses, employee news and calendar items to: **JanetStancliff3@gmail.com**

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**Steve Robinson**  
*Public Works Supervisor  
Street Maintenance*

A lot of the work of maintaining streets, sump pumps, retention basins, and the like is completed by the 18 man crew that works in the Street Maintenance division supervised by Steve Robinson. "We also do the preparation work for slurry sealing on a ten year rotation," said Robinson. "We help the Water department when water mains break and we do all the repairs after they fix the pipes." The division spent a lot of hours during

the last spate of rainstorms monitoring the basins, filling sandbags and potholes and watching the 17 potential sink-holes in the city.

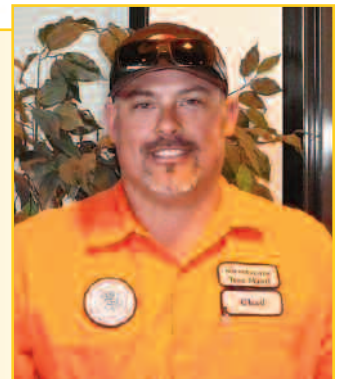
"Public Works divisions are like a family, we all help each other out. When windstorms knock down tree limbs, we give Streetscape a hand, we cover Sanitation on their off Fridays, it works out really well," he said. 2010 saw record days of paving around the city for his busy crew that helps to keep the streets of Torrance safe and running smoothly.

## Our Annual



## Issue

I started work as a temp and became a permanent employee a little over two years ago. I had been laid off from my job with a paving stone company and started my own business cleaning boats underwater before a friend recommended I apply at the city. The work is physically demanding, some days four men trim and load seven tons, but I like it when it's busy. Martin Velez and John Perez trained me, there are a lot of safety issues working with the equipment but they gave me the guidelines. When it rains, we drive every street looking for fallen limbs and downed trees to keep the citizens safe. When residents call, we jump to it, that's the priority. It is good to be working.



**Chad Hawkins**  
*Tree Trimmer  
Public Works*